

# The Harlan Record

No. 61

[www.harlanfamily.org](http://www.harlanfamily.org)

Spring 2023

## MILO HARLAN AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

In 1975, I was standing next to my father at the funeral of my grandmother, Florence Gertrude Harlan Shumaker (George #3), listening to the minister give the eulogy. My ears perked up and I was surprised when he began to give an extended history of her family and the fact that she was “descended from pioneer stock.” That “stock” being the Harlans of central Illinois.

As a child, I spent many weekends with my grandmother at her house in Galesburg, IL, listening to her stories while we poured over her stash of books, family photos, tintypes, and daguerreotypes of stern-looking men and unsmiling women and children.

One of the stories passed down from my grandmother was of my direct ancestor, Milo Harlan (pictured below). Limited facts exist about Milo, an obscure village in Illinois, and his efforts in the Underground Railroad of central Illinois; but this story attempts to tell his tale.



The history of the Underground Railroad in Illinois is similar to other anti-slavery states before and after the Civil War. Route maps differ greatly except for the fact that Illinois, being a free state and bordering the southern pro-slavery

states, was a viable yet dangerous route to freedom in the north, Chicago being one of the Illinois destinations, along with Galesburg, Alton, Quincy, and Princeton.

Milo was born in Ohio in 1840. He was educated there, and around the age of ten the family of nine relocated to Iowa, then to Abingdon, IL in 1852. The family farmed near the village of London Mills and in 1854 settled into 160 acres they had acquired there.

Milo continued his education during the winter months. Summers were spent working on the farm, driving oxen, and other chores. With the coming of the Civil War, two of Milo's brothers immediately enlisted. In 1862, at age 22, Milo answered the call by President Lincoln for a large number of patriots and became a member of Company G 83rd Illinois Infantry Regiment. The regiment was involved in the second battle at Fort Donelson and the second skirmish in Nashville. Shortly thereafter, Milo was promoted to corporal and finished the war, mustering out and travelling to Chicago to receive an honorable discharge. One story, often told by Milo, detailed his escape from injury more than once on the battlefield when Minie balls pierced his hat!

After the war Milo returned to the farm in London Mills, updating the property and raising short-horn cattle, sheep, hogs, and horses. In politics, Mr. Harlan was the staunchest advocate for the party of Lincoln, surely influencing his anti-slavery views and gaining high esteem for his citizenship by contemporaries.

To understand Corporal Harlan's humanitarian views, however, we must investigate his activities before becoming a Union soldier. Prior to the Civil War, the Harlans were active in the London Mills area as farmers and other pursuits adhering to the Harlan work

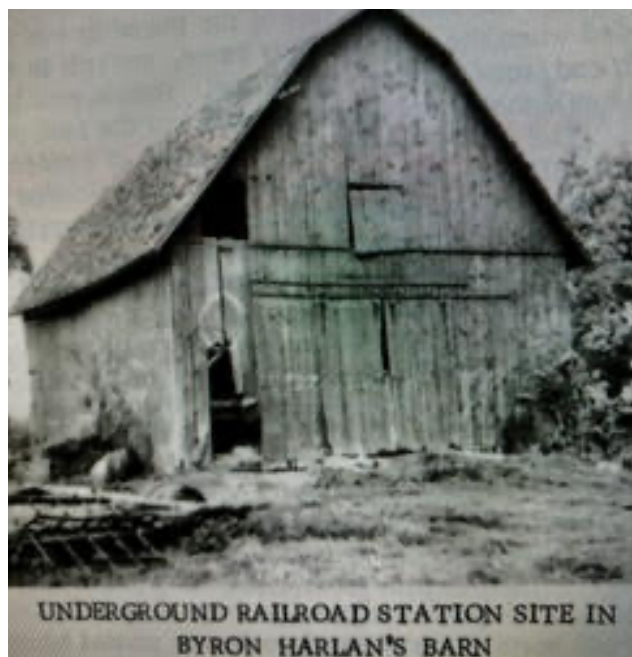
ethic and business acumen. Their original farm was settled by David Harlan in 1853. More importantly, the old Harlan place was home to the Starnes and Harlan Sawmill.

A barn located on the site of the sawmill, later owned by Byron Dale Harlan, was a principal station in the Underground Railroad. The station operated between Fiatt and Galesburg. A second station was located at Midway. As a young man, Milo Harlan was, indeed, the wagon driver who transported slaves heading north from the London Mills station, safely to the courthouse station in Galesburg, a journey of 30 miles.

Although little else is recorded about the barn, the station, and Milo's experience as a young man ferrying fugitives to safety, the Harlan land passed down through various family members. Milo bought the land from his brothers and lived there, a bachelor, until his death in 1924. A racetrack was built on the Harlan place. The track featured the famous racehorses of Tom Grimm and Sam Armstrong. Also constructed was a large picnic grove where belles strolled the flowered paths of the Harlan farm.

I feel great pride and admiration for my ancestor, the great work he engaged in, and for a life well lived. I also can't help but imagine our Quaker ancestors, George and Elizabeth Harlan, and their pacifist and anti-slavery views working their way down through the ages and into the minds and actions of the 19th century Harlans of whom we should all be proud.

by Jeffrey Shumaker



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STATION SITE IN  
BYRON HARLAN'S BARN

## A NEW TEXAS HARLAN BIOGRAPHY

Clinton Cross's newly released biography about his grandfather, *My Grandfather Oliver Harlan Cross and the Ku Klux Klan*, is more than a Harlan family history. The details provided in this interesting story will also appeal to those curious about political, legal, and social history in post-Civil War Texas and the early 1900s. Born in 1868, O.H. Cross's life spans until his death in 1960.

O.H. hailed from humble roots, growing up on his father's cotton farm in Alabama. Before the Civil War, they had slaves for labor. After the War, they were impoverished. Nevertheless, O.H. was able to attend college. He spent a year as a teacher before enrolling in law school.

O.H. Cross had a long and illustrious career that included a law practice in Waco and elections to the positions of Texas State Representative, McClennan County Attorney, and U.S. Representative for Texas. He was well respected by journalists as well as his peers, gaining a reputation for winning cases against gamblers and corruption. After winning his first case, an observer who had taken note of his court demeanor asked another, "Who is that young fellow? He sure is a good lawyer."

Clinton Cross often spent summers with his grandfather on his Texas cotton farm. Despite choosing a career other than farming, O.H. was interested in agriculture his whole life and was a strong advocate for crop rotation in the 1920s and '30s.

Clinton and his brother, Harlan, loved to spend time with their grandfather. Clinton had access to his mother's reel-to-reel tape recorder. He used it to record his grandfather's stories, who was a great storyteller.

As the name of this book implies, a central story in the book is about O.H. Cross's campaign against the Ku Klux Klan. In 1922, he was asked to give a speech to the Anti-Klan League of Waco. Although friends and associates advised him against it, he gave it, saying the Klan was a curse and, "When my conscience tells me something is wrong and a curse to my country, I will fight it."

The Klan was at the height of its power in 1922. In the Democratic Party primary that took place shortly after Cross's speech, Klan-backed candidates won almost every major political race in the state. Cross's speech did not deter the political storm. However, he had the courage to speak out against a powerful but destructive movement when many others (including Pat Neff, Governor of Texas at the time) remained silent.

Clinton Cross's biography is also about his relationship with his grandfather, grounded in love and family pride. The old man's life was almost over, but he still made a difference. He didn't stop the Klan, but he helped shape a life.

Clinton provides several sources in his bibliography that can lead readers to other related topics. The book was published digitally this year and is available on Amazon. Paperback and hardcover editions are also available.

A separate biography of O.H. Cross's grandmother, *Eliza Sims and Two Libraries*, also written by Clinton Cross, will also soon be available on Amazon, with more Texas Harlan history to read.

*Book reviewed by C.J. King*

## **A HARLAN PUBLISHES HER FIRST BOOK**

Veni Harlan, descended from George (#3) James (#11) Stephen (#49) Jesse (#222) Stephen (#887), recently published her first book, *Evangeline Reconsidered*. Although her Harlan roots are primarily in Indiana, Ms. Harlan's book explores the impacts of a poem, written in 1847, with a deep connection to her native Baton Rouge, LA. Below is the press release from her first book, which was inspired by her love of history and of icons:

### **Book Celebrates the 175th Birthday of Longfellow's *Evangeline***

Baton Rouge, LA—When poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* in 1847, he gave voice to a people who had essentially been forgotten and

memorialized an event of historic significance—the forced expulsion in 1755 of some 10,000 Acadians from Nova Scotia. The poem brought recognition for a unique ethnic group and gifted the world with an enigmatic icon, Evangeline.

*Evangeline Reconsidered*, by Veni Harlan, explores the legend, endurance, and impact of poet, poem, and cultural heroine. Evangeline's story was transformative to Acadians all over the world and continues to be an inspiration to musicians, writers, chefs, artists, entrepreneurs, and environmentalists. This female archetype may well be the most influential female icon in North America and most certainly in literature. At 175, she shows no signs of vacating her role as a vibrant symbol of love, hope, and perseverance.

Ms. Harlan is a multi-disciplinary artist, educator, and writer. More about Veni and her book can be found at her publishing website: <https://www.farfieldpublishing.com/>. The book is distributed by: <https://redstickreads.com>

## ***THE HARLAN RECORD***

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**Pleasant Unity, PA 15676**

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Current and previous issues of *The Harlan Record* are also available online at [www.harlanfamily.org](http://www.harlanfamily.org).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Whenever I think about our **Harlan Family in America Association**, I am prone to look back in time, which is understandable for a group that celebrates our shared heritage and genealogy. In our service on the Board, we are always looking ahead - to the next reunion and beyond. We all had a great time at our reunion last summer in Lexington, and then immediately started thinking about our next reunion in 2027.

It has been our practice to rotate the reunion locations. This helps make the reunions more accessible to families in different parts of the country. It also gives us the opportunity to visit different places and learn more about what Harlans have done in those areas. After holding our last two reunions in the eastern half of our country, our intent is to hold the next reunion in the western part of the U.S. We will start evaluating locations by holding our next Board meeting in **Denver on Saturday, June 24, 2023**, with some "location-scouting" on Thursday and Friday. If any of you reading this live in the Denver area or have family there, we would love to meet with you or them while we're there and take advantage of your/their local expertise. Please email me or have them email me at [mikeharlan.40222@gmail.com](mailto:mikeharlan.40222@gmail.com).

We haven't yet made up our minds where we will meet in 2027, and we will be evaluating other sites. If you have a suggestion on where to hold the next reunion in the western U.S., please email me and let me know where you think we should meet and why.

We're also looking ahead to the summer of 2024, when we'll have the next Harlan trip to the United Kingdom. The specifics for this trip are coming together. See the Upcoming Events.

Finally, we are actively trying to grow the number of Harlan relations (no matter how distant) who receive the *Harlan Record* via email. If you have any relations who are not getting it yet, please don't just forward this to them; send us their email addresses and we'll be glad to make sure they start getting this issue and future issues.

*Mike Harlan (Louisville, KY)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### HARLAN MUSIC LEGEND

Rockabilly legend, Billy Harlan, will be performing at VIVA LAS VEGAS! Billy will feature in the Stars of Rock n' Roll Show on Saturday, April 29, 2023. The world's largest rockabilly festival will be keeping Las Vegas and festival goes up late at night from April 27 to April 30, 2023 at the Orleans Hotel. News about the event can be found at the website: <https://www.vivalasvegas.net/>.

Stay tuned for the Fall 2023 newsletter for a feature article on Billy, his life, and his music. News about him and his music can be found on Facebook: Bill Harlan or Billy Harlan Fan Club.

### PEGGY BECKWITH EXHIBIT OPENS MARCH 17

A new exhibit featuring Peggy Beckwith will open to the public on Friday, March 17, at Hildene, the Harlan-Lincoln home in Manchester, VT.

Peggy Beckwith was the great-granddaughter of Abraham and Mary Lincoln and also of Senator James and Ann Eliza Harlan of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. She was born in Mount Pleasant and died in Manchester.

This exhibit explores the dynamic life and memories of the last member of the Lincoln family to live at Hildene. For many years, Peggy was a familiar figure to her Manchester neighbors. In addition to seeing many of Peggy's personal belongings, visitors will delight in a collection of oral histories gathered over the years featuring many entertaining and illuminating stories.

For more information, contact Jesse Keel, Collections & Exhibits Manager at [jesse@hildene.org](mailto:jesse@hildene.org) or visit: <https://hildene.org/about/calendar>.

### LOCAL HARLAN REUNION

On August 6th, 2022, the Harlans of Western Pennsylvania gathered for their annual reunion. They typically meet every year on the second Saturday of August, but in 2022 they met a week earlier. Approximately 35 adults and 3



children were in attendance, which was down from the usual count.

The reunion started around noon with a prayer, followed by a potluck lunch, fellowship, and small guessing games for jars of candy. After lunch, their annual meeting was held. This consisted of the President's Report on any national activities that may be coming up or previously attended and the Secretary/Treasurer's Report. General business was handled, as well as suggestions or ideas for the next reunion. The ages of the oldest and youngest attendees were 95 (female) and 88 (male), and 4 years.

The next reunion will be held Saturday, August 12, 2023, at McConnell's Mill State Park, near Portersville, PA. The organizers and attendees would be pleased to see more local Harlans attend future reunions.

Look for their Facebook page: Harlans of Western Pennsylvania.

*Jessica R. Perine, W. PA Sec./Treasurer*

## UK HARLAN FAMILY TOUR

Hello Harlan Cousins! We are planning a Harlan Family Tour to Scotland and England in the summer of 2024. This will combine some Harlan-related sites with sites of general interest. Let me know if you are interested.

The tour will begin in Edinburgh, Scotland (4 nights and 3 days). We will enjoy sightseeing in Edinburgh, a visit to Sterling Castle, a tour of St. Andrews (including the golf course), a distillery tour (Scotch), and a Highlands excursion. I have toured here and every part of it was fabulous!

The next stop will be to Durham, England (1 night) and a visit to Durham Cathedral. Durham Cathedral is one of my absolute favorite places I have ever visited and I am excited to go back. There will be a stop at Monkwearmouth (where records indicate George Harland was baptized in 1650); and there is a direct tie between St. Cuthbert, the Venerable Bede, Monkwearmouth, and Durham. The Abbey Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, known simply as Monkwearmouth-Jarrow Abbey, was a Benedictine double monastery in the Kingdom of Northumbria. We will visit the Church at

Monkwearmouth and hope to include the sister church at Jarrow.

From Durham we head to Chester. Chester was founded as a Roman fortress in the 1st century A.D. and is known for its extensive Roman walls made of local red sandstone. This has been a great stop on several Harlan tours. We will have 2 nights and 1 day here.

Our last 4 days and nights will be in London. This is something that has not been included in a tour in the last 25 years, so I am glad we could include it on this tour. I am sure it will be fabulous, and I can't wait to go.

The cost of the trip is pending final details as are some of the details of the scheduled stops. If you are interested in hearing more, please send me an email with "Harlan Tour" in the subject line to [ngoodingrn@gmail.com](mailto:ngoodingrn@gmail.com). A test email with all the addresses obtained at the 2022 reunion has already been sent. Email me again if you did not receive that.

*Nancy Gooding*

## REMEMBRANCE FUND

*Donations in honor/memory of*

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from Sarah Surratt (GA)

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## GENEALOGY CORNER

### How Did They Get There?

I am still amazed at how my branch of the Harlan family ended up in Hagerstown, IN. From the family landing near New Castle, DE in 1687, my ancestor, Aaron #41, moved to North Carolina in 1753. Some years later he and his family moved to Laurens District, South Carolina where he and his wife, Sarah Hollingsworth, both died around 1796.

Aaron's son James #199, a farmer, his wife, Edith Howard, and family left South Carolina in the fall of 1799 to make their way north. They spent a year on Big Pigeon River in Tennessee before settling in Barren County, now Monroe County, Kentucky. They were part of the Old Mulkey Meeting House congregation (which is a whole other story). But in 1817 James and his family moved to Darke County, Ohio which is right on the Indiana state line. Edith died first in 1839 with James following in 1842. They were buried in the Bethel Cemetery which was part of the Bethel Christian Church that they had help establish.

James' son John #739 had left Kentucky in 1815, prior to his parents, and settled in Union County, Indiana where he married Catherine Brown Harlan. She was the widow of George Harlan #705 (no direct relation). For unknown reasons after their children were grown, John and Catherine moved to Van Buren County, Iowa in 1851 where they lived out the rest of their lives. They had acquired and sold a lot of land prior to moving to Iowa.

Of their 6 children George #2508 was the only one who chose to remain in Union County, IN. George and Malinda Stevens Harlan continued the farming tradition of the family. George is the last of my direct line to be included in the *History and Genealogy of the Harlan Family*, with his children listed.

Of their 10 children, John Franklin #6326 born in 1844 is my great grandfather. He married Adaline (Addie) West and they later moved to a farm near Greenfield, IN in 1885, where he later became one of the first rural route mail carriers of Hancock County. He served in that capacity until his health required his retirement. John died in 1925 and Adaline in 1943.

John's son, George #6326-5 (being the 5th child in the family), was born in Union County, IN in 1881. His wife, Mary Riddle Hilts, was born in Kansas in 1888. George was working at a dry goods store in New Castle, IN when his future wife Mary came from Kansas to visit a cousin. They struck up a friendship and, as they say, the rest is history. George took the train to Kansas where they married in 1913. They then returned to Indiana and settled in Hagerstown to begin their married life.

George and Mary raised four children of their own. George and his first wife had one child before she died. George continued in sales in the dry goods business, eventually opening his own store in Hagerstown. With the market crash and the Depression, George closed the dry goods store and started a coal business. Mary continued to operate the business for a few years after George's death in 1959.

Their daughter, Virginia #6326-52, and her siblings had the privilege of being raised in a small town where everyone knew everyone! Virginia was the only child who chose to remain in Hagerstown; the others moved to other areas of the country. As the first female in her direct line, the Harlan name was finished with her family. Charles and Virginia Atkinson raised their children in the same small town, and the story continued. Their two daughters raised their children in the same town; then the grandchildren and great grandchildren have grown up in the same small town.

Now that you've heard my story of 10 generations (I skipped the first two – George #3 and Aaron #8), perhaps you would like to share some of your Harlan family history. I am sure other Harlans have stories that many would find interesting.

*Cynthia Rhoades*  
*Director of Genealogy*

If you have genealogy questions or comments, please contact our Director of Genealogy, Cynthia, at [cr.rhoades@comcast.net](mailto:cr.rhoades@comcast.net). Please put "Harlan" in the subject line.

# HARLAN FAMILY IN AMERICA

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## TWO NEW MEMBERS JOIN THE 90+ Club

Norma Jean Yocum Harlan was born in 1929 in Warrenton, MO. She married Frank M. Harlan (1922-2010) in 1948. Frank was the grandson of Joseph Jerome Harlan #1039. Together they raised two sons while living in St.

Louis, MO. After retirement they moved to Hendersonville, NC and subsequently to Asheville. Norma remains in excellent health, enjoying the mountains of western N. Carolina.

Margaret Mignon McCurdy Millin was born in 1932 in Bristol, OK to Almeda Jane Perry and William Edward McCurdy. Moving multiple times as a youth and then as a wife to John (Jack) Millin, she has lived in OK, MO, PA, and GA. In grade school during World War II she lived in Oak Ridge, TN while her father worked on the Manhattan Project. Today she makes her home in Florida. Together she and Jack raised three children, and now she can boast of three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Margaret is descended from George Harlan #3. In addition, thanks to Elmer Star's *History of the Cherokee Indians*, she traces herself as the 4th great-granddaughter of Nancy Ward, and is a 90-year-old card-carrying member of the Cherokee Nation.

## CONDOLENCES

We extend our sympathy to the family of Anna Mae Harwood Crane of Whittier, CA on her death in 2022.

We extend our sympathy to the family of Majory Harlan Sgroi of Orchard Park, NY on her death in 2022.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Checking Account Balance (9/1/22) **\$ 7,227.88**

### INCOME

Donations \$1,511.81

Reunion store \$35.90

**TOTAL INCOME \$1,547.71**

### DISBURSEMENTS

Fall newsletter

**TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$-1,380.77**

**Checking Account Balance \$7,394.82**  
**(1/31/23)**

**Certificate of Deposit \$18,004.54**

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